

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/EP2004/003377

Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the language, this report is based on the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
- ☐ This report is based on translations from the original language into the following language _____, which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:
- ☐ international search (Rule 12.3 and 23.1(b))
- ☐ publication of the international application (Rule 12.4)
- ☐ international preliminary examination (Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3)
2. With regard to the elements of the international application, this report is based on *(replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report)*:
- ☐ the international application as originally filed/furnished
- ☒ the description:
- pages 1-13 _____ as originally filed/furnished
- pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____
- pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____
- ☒ the claims:
- nos. _____ as originally filed/furnished
- nos.* _____ as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19
- nos.* 1-22 _____ received by this Authority on 04.11.2004 with letter
- nos.* _____ received by this Authority on of 04.11.2004
- ☒ the drawings:
- sheets 1/8-8/8 _____ as originally filed/furnished
- sheets* _____ received by this Authority on _____
- sheets* _____ received by this Authority on _____
- ☐ a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) – see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing.
3. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:
- ☐ the description, pages _____
- ☐ the claims, nos. _____
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/figs _____
- ☐ the sequence listing (*specify*): _____
- ☐ any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*): _____
4. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).
- ☐ the description, pages _____
- ☐ the claims, nos. _____
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/figs _____
- ☐ the sequence listing (*specify*): _____
- ☐ any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*): _____

* If item 4 applies, some or all of those sheets may be marked "superseded."

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/EP2004/003377

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	1-22	YES
	Claims		NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims		YES
	Claims	1-22	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	1-22	YES
	Claims		NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

1. The application fails to meet the requirement of PCT Article 33(3) for the following reasons:

1.1 WO 98/37457 (document D1), which is considered to be the closest prior art, discloses a microreactor comprising reactor chambers and heat conveyance chambers, with **spacer elements** in all the chambers and catalyst material applied to the inside walls of the reactor chambers (see D1: International Search Report, in particular figure 5). The channels in the microreactor in figure 5 are 60 microns deep and 430 microns wide. The hydraulic diameter is therefore **105 microns**, and the width-height ratio is **7.2**.

1.2 The subject matter of claim 1 differs from that of D1 in that the width-height ratio between adjacent spacer elements is between 10 and 800.

1.3 The technical problem to be solved with regard to D1 is that of designing a microreactor that has greater resistance to high pressures and temperatures (including explosive process conditions) than the microreactor of D1 (see page 4, paragraph 10 in the

Box No. V

Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability;
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present application). The applicant states that the invention according to claim 1 solves the technical problem of interest "in a surprising way" (page 4, line 35 to page 5, line 4), yet it is not clear from the application that the claimed reactor works better than the reactor disclosed in D1 (a width-height ratio of 7.2 is fairly close to 10). There are no comparative examples to clearly demonstrate the surprising effect, and it is therefore not apparent from the description whether the technical problem of interest has in fact been solved in relation to D1. The subject matter of claim 1 therefore does not involve an inventive step.

- 1.4 Claims 2 to 14 and the corresponding process claims (claims 15 to 22) do not contain any features that meet the PCT requirements in respect of inventive step, since the features of these claims either are known from D1 or represent routine measures.